

seen, all of the changes in every facet of public and private life, yet that commitment remains. Virlane and Roland's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 50th anniversary may their commitment grow even stronger, as they continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

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IN RECOGNITION OF DANNY  
THOMAS

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**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Fire Chief Danny Thomas who is retiring after 34 years of public service within the town of Trophy Club. The town has benefited immeasurably from his unfaltering dedication, unfailing commitment, and unwavering devotion to the residents he served. Chief Thomas has served in several different capacities and played an integral role in the growth of the Trophy Club Fire Department.

Chief Thomas began his career in 1982 as a volunteer firefighter. In 1999 he was hired as a lieutenant and within one month rose to the rank of captain. In 2006 he was promoted to chief and has proudly served the Trophy Club community ever since. Along with his promotion to fire chief he became the emergency management coordinator and fire marshal for the town. Chief Thomas had a vision of growth and safety for this small community and has stayed true to that vision from the beginning.

When Chief Thomas began his career Trophy Club only had a volunteer fire department. Today, it is a full time department providing emergency medical and fire rescue services; boasting 16 full-time employees and four volunteers. Much of the significant expansion and the many improvements the fire station has seen can be attributed to Chief Thomas. He oversaw the construction of MUD 1 Fire Station in 2011 and implemented the Citizens Fire Academy and Citizens Emergency Response Team. Chief Thomas brought professional insight and wisdom to his team. His legacy will not be forgotten and his service will have a lasting impact within the department, as well as the Trophy Club community.

As Chief Thomas retires, he is highly esteemed by his colleagues and the community he has served for over 30 years. It is my privilege to honor such an outstanding citizen and to serve the town of Trophy Club in the U.S. House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING THE HOLY AND  
GREAT COUNCIL

**HON. LEE M. ZELDIN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church.

Christianity and Orthodox Christianity, in particular, have suffered greatly in recent years. This negative development is the result of the Islamic fanaticism perpetuated by the Islamic State and other terror groups using the war in Syria as an excuse to "ethnically cleanse" Orthodox Christians from their villages. One such horror was the international broadcast of Islamic State members simultaneously beheading twenty-one Egyptians because they would not convert to Islam when ordered to denounce their Coptic Orthodox Christian faith.

Several Orthodox Christian Churches from around the world will gather in what is called a Great and Holy Council for the first time in over 1,000 years. The focus of the Council will be internal activities of the various Orthodox Churches; the current crisis for Christians in the Middle East is also a danger for so many Orthodox Christians and should not go unobserved at this history meeting.

All Christians and all men and women of faith and peace should focus on this Great and Holy Council and the individual who convened the various hierarchs, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. He possibly more than any other Christian leader understands the Muslim world; during his life he has seen Muslim cruelty toward Christians, which has greatly diminished the number of Christians in the Republic of Turkey.

The Ecumenical Patriarch experienced the 1955 pogrom carried out against the large Greek Orthodox community in Turkey. The pogrom resulted in many unnecessary Greek deaths and the destruction of thousands of Greek Orthodox businesses, homes, and cemeteries. Thousands upon thousands of Greeks fled the country in the aftermath.

The Greek Orthodox community in Turkey has been reduced to a fraction of what it once was, yet in light of such violence, the confiscation of thousands of Ecumenical Patriarchal properties, and restrictions of religious freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness has found ways to cooperate and work constructively with the Muslim majority in his homeland of Turkey. The Ecumenical Patriarch has much to bring to the table regarding today's crisis for Christians in Muslim majority countries.

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RECOGNIZING COLONEL VICTOR  
GABRIEL GARCIA

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**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Colonel Victor Gabriel Garcia, Information Operations Chief for CENTCOM, for his work combatting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In

the last two years, ISIL has developed and implemented never before seen tactics by using social media to recruit foreign fighters and the internet to propagate and instill fear. With the emergence of this continually evolving threat, Colonel Garcia has overhauled and expanded the CENTCOM J39 directorate to counter ISIL's internet propaganda machine.

Currently, he is spearheading an effort for the Department of Defense to train and equip a joint force capable of addressing emerging terrorist threats on the internet and social media. They plan to develop a permanent and suitable solution to incorporate the policy, personnel, training, and facilities for all military commanders across the Department of Defense to better understand the tactics of ISIL as well as engage and influence their target audience.

Additionally, Colonel Garcia and his team are in the process of developing a Web Operations Center for the Department of Defense. For the first time, the Department of Defense plans to have a centralized location where hostile internet activity can be monitored and addressed accordingly. This will provide an early warning system to assist military commanders with a variety of operations and allow them to react quickly, possibly saving the lives of our troops.

I am grateful for Colonel Garcia's admirable service and dedication in developing countermeasures against ISIL.

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TRIBUTE TO SHAREF AL NAJJAR  
FOR HIS EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE  
PEOPLE OF THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS AND  
THE UNITED STATES

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**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is no exaggeration to say that the past several years have been among the most challenging in our nation's history. The collapse of the housing market, the turmoil on Wall Street and the ensuing financial crisis, the severe economic downturn of 2008 which saw the loss of millions of middle-class jobs, and the ever present threat of terrorist attacks on our homeland are enough to make many question whether the American Dream is still attainable and to conclude that our best days are behind us.

I do not share this view. The future of our country is bright and I firmly believe that our best days lay ahead. One of the reasons I am so optimistic that the 21st century will be known as the second "American Century" is the extraordinary quality, talent, commitment, and energy of the young people who will in time assume the responsibility of leadership.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress we know well, perhaps better than most, how blessed our nation is to have in reserve such exceptional young men and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day.

Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

I rise today to pay tribute and bid fond farewell to Sharef Al Najjar, an exceptional young man who has done incredible work in my office in service to my constituents in the Eighteenth Congressional District of Texas. Sharef's, who joined my team in 2011, will be relocating to Atlanta, Georgia with his fiancée, Gillian Robinson, where they will both pursue graduate studies at Emory University's Goizueta Business School.

From the moment he joined my staff, Sharef's talents and aptitude for logistics, information technology, project management, and administration were apparent for all to observe. These gifts, combined with Sharef's winning personality and cooperative spirit made him an invaluable teammate, mentor, and valued friend to his colleagues, who all will miss his good cheer and Zen but wish him and Gillian well in their future endeavors, which I am confident will include continued service in furtherance of the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I sought public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said:

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

By this measure, there are many other great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my offices. They may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism of young people like Sharef Al Najjar, and those working in the offices of my colleagues, help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of persons like Sharef Al Najjar and Gillian Robinson the future of our country is bright and its best days lie ahead. I wish them well.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that such thoughtful committed young men and women like Sharef Al Najjar and Gillian Robinson can be found working in my office, those of my colleagues, and in every community in America. Their good works will keep America great, good, and forever young.

#### CONGRATULATING EDEN PRAIRIE SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP

#### HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the members of the Eden Prairie Girls' Synchronized Swimming Team, who recently won the Minnesota High School State Championship.

The Eagles triumphed at Friday's state meet, where two Eden Prairie routines—short trio team and long team—were rewarded first-place finishes. It was a close competition, but Eden Prairie's excellent figure scores put them over the edge to secure both wins.

This Eden Prairie team was determined to defy odds from the start of the season. They competed in a number of close battles this spring, including one against Hopkins High School where they won by 0.02 points. They ended the season with a strong stroke to bring home a championship for the school and for the community.

Mr. Speaker, this synchronized swimming team is fortunate to have so many talented members who have worked hard to get to this point. But even more than that, we commend these student athletes for living up to their obligations in both the classroom and in our community.

Congratulations again to the athletes, coaches, families, and fans of the Eden Prairie High School Synchronized Swimming Team.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF GLENWOOD

#### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the City of Glenwood, Iowa for its recognition as a 2015 Tree City USA sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry program (the Forest Service).

The City of Glenwood has met the core standards for tree care during the past year. Over 135 million Americans live in Tree City USA communities. In its 40th year of celebration, the Tree City USA program is critical to the U.S. Forest Service. This federal partner delivers technical and financial resources to states, cities and communities across the nation with each community adhering to a State Action Plan, guiding investments in each state while accomplishing local projects and programs.

The U.S. Forest Service and Arbor Day Foundation cooperate with communities to establish healthy forests, improve air and water quality and contribute to important national energy conservation goals. These local investments create long term major environmental improvements nationwide. When communities like Glenwood are recognized it makes me proud to represent our great state in the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the City of Glenwood and urge my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating them for receiving this award and wishing them nothing but continued success.

#### HONORING RYAN GATTERMEIR ON BEING NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

#### HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ryan Gattermeir, who has recently been named President of the Missouri Association of REALTORS.

The president serves as a part of the 5-member leadership council for the Missouri Association of REALTORS, which is an advocacy group representing the interests of realtors in our state. The president serves on a volunteer basis for a one year term, and is a role that is instrumental in the day-to-day operations and policy goals of the organization.

Ryan has long been an influential force in the Missouri real estate community. Growing up as the son of a realtor, he has been immersed in the industry since he was young. After graduating from Westminster College in 1996, he went to work with his father's real estate business. Eight years later, he struck out on his own and was met with great success. In addition to his thriving real estate business, Ryan is on the Board of Directors for the National Association of REALTORS, as well as chairing five committees in the local Missouri chapter.

Mr. Speaker, Ryan Gattermeir has built a long and successful career in the real estate industry, and has proven to be a capable leader among his peers. I'm confident that he will represent the realtors of Missouri to the very best of his ability and will spare no effort in advocating on their behalf. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ryan on his appointment, and wish him luck over his term as president.

#### HONORING MR. PAUL SCHAPIRO

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2016*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Paul Schapiro, who passed away on June 3, 2016, after 58 remarkable years.

Paul left an indelible mark on our Napa Valley community with his friendly demeanor and profound generosity. He volunteered his time for civic causes with the American Canyon Lions Club, and was a leader in the local Democratic community, serving as Treasurer for the Napa County Democratic Central Committee. He was an outspoken activist and regularly attended peace vigils to bring awareness to causes close to his heart.

Paul's dedication to bringing about meaningful change in our society set an impressive example that we should all strive to emulate. A passionate proponent of sustainability, Paul rode his bike to work every day, eventually winning the Napa County Bicycle Coalition's Bicycle Commuter of the Year Award in 2014. Impressively, his bike had more mileage on it than his car.

Those close to Paul agree he was a joy to be around and had a welcoming and gentle